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POEMS PRIMAL



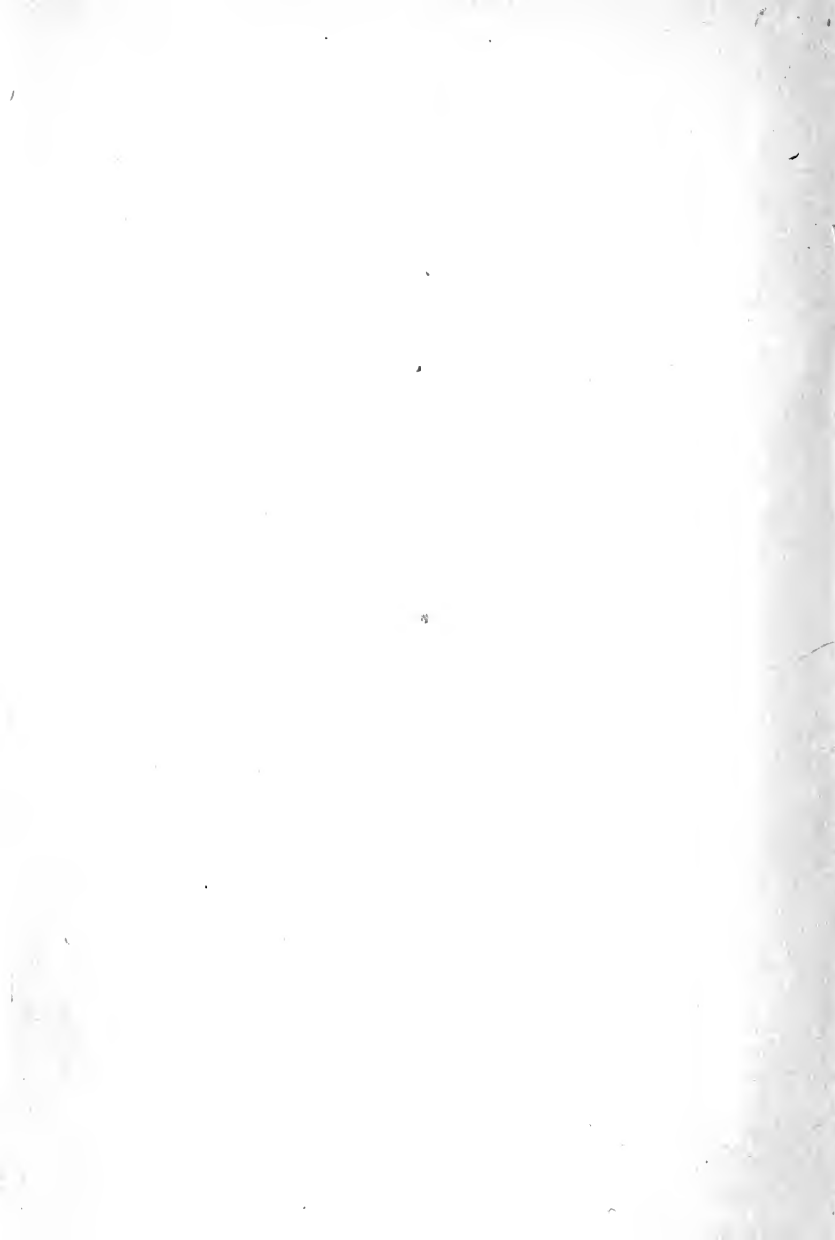
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POEMS PRIMAL



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CHARLES ROSS WHITE



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POEMS PRIMAL



SLEEPING BEAUTY

Pensive as a fairy lily
On a stem of gold ;
Nodding as a primrose, primly,
To old Boreas bold.

Golden-hearted, saintly lily,
Pale as cloistered nun.
Sunny petals lifting shyly
To the tropic sun.

Every petal lifting shyly,
Fast as spring declares.
Every sleeping beauty waking
Into beauty unawares.

WHEN BABY RUNS THE TOWN

Like burly, golden bumble-bees,
All cloyed with sweets of June,
Hear everywhere the babies dear,
How they buzz a merry tune.

And we kiss them for their mothers.
And we pinch them for their dad;
And they will live to jolly us,
When we are old and sad.

They'll pay us back with interest,
When things turn upside down—
In Topsy-Turvey land, you know,
When Baby runs the town.

THE SWEETS OF LIFE

Baby Blue's sweet google goos,
 Persisting through the realms of time;
And standing tests of centuries,
 Prove love a thing sublime.

Each tiny stranger from the sky,
 With its red ruby heart,
Is a fairy golden treasure—
 A God's gift, at the start.

They play upon our heart-strings,
 Voicing their sweetest tone;
A part of every impulse,
 And the charm that makes sweet home.

BO-PEEP

Sweet baby eyes 'neath curly locks,
All golden lights and azure blue;
With smiles and kisses wavering near
Between enchanting dimples two.

Old lovers true attend each wish,
Accounting every tiny pain;
Construing every cry a wish,
And every wish a duty plain.

Thus queening royal till the end;
Until from out your cradle-throne
You creep on hands and knees, Bo-peep,
A-worshipping a world of stone.

SPRING DAYS

The bees are in the clover,
The year is in the dawn.
There's an ever rousing chorus
When spring-time's moving on.

It sets all nature humming
With the sap of things that bloom;
It fills the constitution,
And crowds for elbow room.

It bubbles in a chorus,
With joyful cantatations,
A-flooding heavenly musicales
With soulful recitations.

WAYLANDS

White, fleecy clouds, they sail the sky
Like blossom of its trees.
Its orchards old instilling sweets
On every evening breeze.

Grey walls of stone, and mossy grown,
From hills to dale wind down,
Through shaded walks and forest paths,
In sylvan metres bound.

Old forest trails o'er hill and dale
A-meeting plain and wold;
O'er logging roads of corduroy,
And bridges centuries old.

A fairy circle charmed by winds,
And of the whispering pine;
O'er tree-tops of a forest old,
Meeting a blue sky-line,

Where Present and the Past link hands
Above a wilderness of pine.
A forest fastness breathing peace,
Through sylvan shades of Time.

GREEN FIELDS AND LAUGHING WATERS

Bright days of sunny memories;
Red days 'tween the earth and sky;
When the green earth held high revelry,
And never a day went by

Without some sweeter flower born,
Some new joy, 'neath the sky
Wrapt in a dainty violet shade,
Or a rose-bloom nearer by.

The trees kissed low the river's brim,
And, arching strand to strand,
Long tendrils green they flowered between,
Embowering all the land:

Through rocky basins flecked with foam,
Brown, rippling waters spanned
In eddying currents, silvery threads
Fretting a golden strand.

Green, mossy boulders tip'd the stream ;
Green hills, above the din
In peaceful calm stretched out their arms,
To let the waters in.

And lowly kine, knee-deep in June,
They contentedly abide,
Reflecting their docile faces
In the glowing water side.

A MOONLIGHT NIGHT

The moon dips low o'er a silvery sea,
In a silvery pathway bright ;
A-lighting the dark pines' towering shade,
A-queening the starry night.

O'er mossy banks and wide lagoons
Its starry pathway gleams ;
And in and out, in starry maze,
Shuttle its pale moonbeams.

Its starry pathway to the sky,
Sinks seas and heaven in one—
One glorious, iridescent world—
Till the rising of the sun.

THE VOICE OF NATURE

The tongues of brooks and rushing seas ;
The songs of birds 'mid whispering trees ;
The low winds murmuring o'er the leas ;
Love's voice is these.

In spring-time, when the world's attune ;
When red life paints the rosy June ;
Love's eloquence and nature's wed,
Breathes through the air, through words unsaid.

THE SPIRIT OF THE WOODS

The spirit of the woods shuts down
 Upon the heart of man ;
Spell-binding by its solitudes,
 That deeper mysteries span ;

Spell-binding by its whispering pines,
 Their wavering interludes
A-joining with the singing stars,
 In mystic solitudes ;

A-joining with the singing stars
 That shine above its crest ;
While, deep within its underworld,
 A spirit sits, possessed ;

Possessed by day-dream glories,
And loving the solitudes.
And knowing no other spirit
But the Spirit of the Woods.

EVOLUTION

Once a cloven hoof did leave on earth
A beastlike trail behind.
A hairy coat shut darkness in,
And blinded human mind.

Then ministering angels came ;
Crowned darkness with a star ;
Upraised black lids from beastliness,
To shining worlds afar.

Then Woman's voice stole sweetly in,
Adown a sunbeam's ray;
And charmed life woke to nobleness—
To a sweeter minstrelsy.

Through waving, musical, reed worlds,
Love's flute-like voice enchanted;
Upraised mankind from beastliness,
Black nether worlds disarmed.

A brighter Venus—heavenly star—
On mortals did attend;
Upraised the standard of the world,
And reclaimed the sons of men.

RED ADAM'S CLAY

Life passes in a fitful dream,
Between dark seas of time.
It knows the sloughs of deep despond,
And the lees of life's red wine.

It roots to live in fleshly joys ;
It reaches to the skies.
It's past and lost ; it's light, benight ;
Its prayers to heaven are lies.

It loves its rosy, red loves best—
Its angels in disguise.
It towers, and it bows to earth ;
Knows good, and bad denies.

It's made of clay—Red Adam's clay.
It seeks its level own.
Its spirit wings are weighted down
To the marrow of its bone.

Its vital red heart living ends,
Rejects the ways divine.
Rejoices in the ways of earth,
And kindred with its kind.

LOVE AND NATURE

I met Love as a thing apart—

A part of heaven and the rose ;

A spirit of light, and infinite,

And above all human pose.

I wooed Love on the ocean wave,

And 'mid the eternal hills ;

In forest lands, and desert lands,

And by the dancing rills.

It cloistered in the honeyed sweets

Of clover fields and flowering leas ;

With song-birds caroling at morn,

And on the evening breeze.

'Neath sun and moon I glorified
And worshipped every mood;
It brightened all my wanderings
By pictured stream and wood.

At home it sat beside me.
In woodland and in dell;
Beloved mentor of my dreams—
Sweet dreams no words can tell.

LOVE'S DREAM

When Love was born, of the stars and flowers,
It opened all my heart attune
To every beauty 'neath the sun—
Like roses of your cheeks abloom.

Like roses of your cheeks abloom,
That, lily-like, links starry morn
With golden hours and sunny days—
Red-letter days, of love and song.

The blue of summer skies your eyes,
Above an Eden's rosy ring
Of rosy lips—like roses red—
Bespeaking love that angels sing.

Your youth, all framed in hair of gold,
Enraptured by its visage bright ;
Enlightens all my days with joy,
And glorifies the darkest night.

Though continent and seas between ;
Though hills and plains they intervene ;
They cannot separate true hearts,
Or dim the vision of love's dream.

ELENE

In other worlds than this, Elene,
We met as star and night;
You were the star, and I the gloom
That only brightened in your sight.

That little dimple in your chin
"The angels kissed," you say.
I do not question it, Elene,—
If angels kiss that way.

We'll drink to love in loving cup,
And, while the glasses ring,
We'll chorus all your charms, Elene,
As only lovers sing.

LOVE'S EDEN

We lived in Eden once, my darling ;
We called it heaven, home, or any name ;
Whatever angel hosts its precincts guarding,
However named, 'twas heaven all the same.

The bliss of young love's wondrous gladness ;
The first love's kiss that ever young love knew ;
The bitter-sweets of love—their added contrast
But gilded every blissful love anew.

The seas and hills reflected every gladness ;
The heart of nature, loving, one and one.
Love mingled with the elements its gladness,
Nor cloud did dim the splendor of the sun.

The bliss of loving showed in blissful oneness ;
The bitter-sweets of waiting and decline,
Ne'er lost, but gained a double, heaping measure,
Filled to the sparkling brim with life's red wine.

The home-life—ever better than Parnassus ;
The baby prattlers scrambling at my knee ;
Their baby hugs encircling heaven around us,
Make heaven on earth one sweet reality.

What mockery, then, a Paradise or Eden
Here where we found our Eden every time?
Not in the cloud-land were its glories hidden,
But at our feet our Eden shone sublime.

HEART MUSIC

The music of the heart one voice
 Blends with the choirs above ;
The Choir Invisible, and sweet,
 Bespeaking realms of love.

Sweet voices guard its minstrelsy
 Above all mortal wrong ;
And angels' wings ensweep its strings
 Into immortal song.

Winging on flames of heavenly light,
 Into one immortal lay ;
Its melodies celestial borne
 Into a golden day.

MEMORIES DEAR

Sweet memories that on the winds,
All laden with a mystic glow
From fields of violet and rose,
Bring sweets of the long ago.

Lighting the toil of latter days ;
Crowning the battles won ;
Helping the homely tasks of life,
Until life's day is done.

SWEETHEART

Your hair, the way I like it best,
Is woven in a web of gold ;
Your eyes, deep wells o'er brimming
With loveliness untold.

Your most Grecian nose, patrician,
Short upper lip, that speaks a kiss ;
And a delight and pleasure in it
Ne'er commiserating earthly bliss.

Call it "friend" then, at your pleasure.
I'll act the part sweetheart begun ;
Any part—a friend or sweetheart—
To be at your side as one.

Warmed with kisses 'neath the stars;
With red love to overflow;
All the barriers cast down—
In friendships name, you know.

If your love had guided me
In and out the portal straight,
Into the promised land I touched—
Then love had conquered fate.

LOVE FOR LOVE

A mountainous and rushing river,
Then lake and river in a mirror,
Reflecting peace forever, ever,
Till their crystal waters gather,
 Warring, tempest toss'd.

Walled by mountains and deep wood,
In a sylvan solitude;
In a haven of the blest;
And gathering to its sheltering breast
 The wrecked and lost.

Sea lines meeting to the sky,
Where the white-winged ships go by,
Tossing on the foaming wave

That their dipping pinions lave ;
Sailing on, and on.

And ever, high above the storm,
Over the sea and land is borne
White signals, waving sea and land,
And answering signals, strand to strand,
From eve till morn.

Shrouded mists that wind alone
Wherever mystic waters moan ;
Wherever hapless spirits fled ;
Wherever ceaseless requiems said,
O'er deeps, forlorn.

Wherever speech and song are stilled,
The master mind, the bold and skilled,

The eloquent, and stammering, tongue,
Behind the veil they rest as one,
Until the dawn.

Now seas, the color of the rose,
A rosy dawn, a golden close ;
For love has list, the lovers say ;
And, hesitating, lost its way,
As young love will.

Red love that blinder vision brings ;
But, freed from dross of worldly things,
When love its way,
Holds love ensway,
As young love will.

Red love, that very page at knee,
Lifting a roving eye, can see,
Surprising my lady's love.
Such her plumings—like a dove—
 To catch love's eye.

No damsel making love a jest ;
But having instincts of the blest.
Enjoying capture, love the goal ;
And building castles, heart and soul,
 From lover's sigh.

Rosy, saintly, tempting fate ;
Arousing barbarous deeds of hate ;
The saintlier, bloodier wars endured,
The lovelier, sweeter spoils assured,
 As in days of old.

Light-hearted, filled with joyous song,
While lovers, battling brave and strong
For virgin love, the strongest dare;
Only the brave deserve the fair,
Her virgin gold.

The brave and loyal knight, and true,
The broke and prosperous, two by two;
Bravely they wheel and meet;
Bravely they kneel at feet,
Till their love's told.

As the lover ever kneels,
Swearing all the love he feels,
By her saintly image roused,
Fresh from wassail and carouse,
He pleads to heaven.

Red-handed vassals of rapine,
Their panoply of war does shine ;
For such virgin love decked bold,
Trusting that their tarnished gold
All sin will leaven.

In and out they caracole,
Lovers, pledging with their soul,
In the glitter of their arms,
All jingling with love charms,
Their name and gold.

Sweetly fair, as Venus shines
In the starry heavens, reclines
My lady on her throne ;
Sweetly beauteous, and alone ;
And queenly cold.

Last a lover—fast and late—
Unmindful of his kingly fate ;
Unknown, alone—kneels to the ground
And casts a minstrel spell around,
Up to the throne.

No boaster of the serried ranks ;
No swaggerer, playing tuneless pranks ;
But love, in all its imagery,
Breathes from his soul its minstrelsy,
To love, its own.

Grim battlements in rocky seat,
O'er my lady's bower meet.
From the beetling crags look down
Grim guardians of the Eden round,
O'er love and hate.

But never yet did lover sigh,
In the love-light of loves' eye.
Never yet did lover dare
All the lover's dark despair,
 'Less tempting fate.

Ever strong in war's alarums,
While the colder heart disarms.
Ever fast at love's command,
All the lovelorn factions stand
 A-guarding love.

Ever false love fears its own ;
Ever false love does bemoan ;
Ever jealous is its wound,
Ever every hope unfound,
 While love is love.

Ever 'neath the purpling skies,
While the golden day abides.
Ever through the Arctic night,
Till the morn's effulgent light
Wins joy from woe.

As the lover ever kneels,
Swearing all the love he feels;
Every other love disowns;
Never lover-like bemoans
Such love and woe.

In the west are standards streaming;
In the east are lances gleaming,
Driving hard the hurrying braves—
Hurrying to untimely graves—
The swains forlorn.

Then my own fair love comes down
From her starry, golden throne,
To the level of my own ;
And her wondrous love is shown
 From eve till morn.

Now warrings ringing on the breeze,
O'er trembling strands and bloody seas,
And thrones they topple to the dust—
All images but war and lust—
 As things unborn.

Grim war is stalking o'er the land,
Its votaries on either hand.
A pirate crew and robber band—
The flotsam of the wrecked and damned—
 Wake night till morn.

But lovers meet with clasping hand
Above the bivouacs of the damned.
With loving eyes above the mob,
Whose end is but to lust and rob,
Till death robs all.

The queen, as loving as a maid,
All lovingly love's tithings paid
Love, so saintly when forlorn ;
Love, so joyous when upborne ;
For love is all.

LOVE'S PLEA

Only her lips, like sweets of flowers,
Her heart of my wine makes gold.
Only her lips, like roses red,
And kisses sweet dreams enfold.

Only her charms abounding are,
Impassioned, graceful, free;
They imparadise, within her arms,
The whole of heaven, for me.

O Love, but listen to my plea,
My every love declare.
Let love but charm my weary heart,
And drive away dull care.

Let all my love confess its love ;
My every love make known.
Unseal the treasure of its keep,
To kneel at love's white throne.

LOVE'S SWAY

Red, mortal passions, hope and love,
In train like fired wine,
In hurrying currents sweep my veins,
When you are truly mine.

When giving all the love you know,
While trembling with fear.

Enrapturing my life, my love,
Through smiles and tears, my dear.

Then cry, dear girl, if crying will
Lighten your heart of fears,
Can brighten love's horizon line,
One clearing storm of tears.

I know, dear girl, we'll meet again;
Will drive away dull care,
Win love's reward, and lovers' bliss,
Where fainter hearts despair.

LOVE

Love is the winning of the brave,
The star-chord of the soul,
That, still alluring love with love,
Wins soul from mortal mould.

Thanksgivings on its altars shine;
It wakes a sleeping land;
It tones the chords of life anew,
With a warm and loving hand.

It holds the soul of man enskied;
It guards it on its way.
And on the path of life it leads
And sets his feet of clay.

NEW YEAR BELLS

A New Year Day of bells
On low winds chiming.
Sweet diapasons
Down the heavens borne,
From every steeple;
Ringing out God's glory;
Awakening the heart
This New Year morn.

We hear their pæans
Echoing the hillsides,
Beyond the confines
Of the lowly dell.
Above the wooded fields,
And hills and pastures,

Their ringing pæans
Heavenly anthems swell.

Our hearts lie open
To their gentle teachings.
We lose the bitterness
Of daily life.
We join in spirit
Every ringing measure.
Enraptured feel
The beatitudes of life.

We feel the simple faith
Of lowly tenets;
Know power of faith,
Above the doubts of mind.

Know charity, and love—
Life's simplest teachings—
Above the sophistries
Of proud mankind.

We feel no less the reverence
Of the shriven,
Though clothed in lowly garb
Or laurel crown.
No surcease of life's suffering
Or pleasure;
No rank in joy
Or suffering is found.

O New Year Day of bells,
On low winds chiming

Thy messages to earth!
They ease the way.
They give the wanderer
In thy gates new courage;
And cheer his journey
In the narrow way.

WHEN LOVE WAS BORN

A sunbeam's kiss awoke love's morn,
And, over the cold world's colding dawn,
A spirit of light burst through the night,
Flooding the world with joy upborn.

Oh, love it lives in the red, red rose ;
Earth borne, it turns from heaven above,
And it nestles close 'mid the roses red,
And in the loving cup we pledge red love.

LOVE'S WORLD

Grim, warring legions into kingdoms grown,
With mighty rulers down to Harold's time ;
With ringing pæans, sounding victory,
Till all confounding speech in speechless rhyme.

The winged future shadowed in a glass ;
The living miracle : the blood from stone ;
The future wrought before the future was ;
Beyond pale phophecy the spirit borne.

And life has each a-part, finite, benight,
And each a medley freighted with its doom.
Its every life-breath drawing nearer heaven ;
Its every impulse quickening to the tomb.

Hearts sicken in the ways of peaceful days—
The sordid days, that strike the noblest down ;
The days of peace that know no Christian haven.
Within its gates no honest ends are found.

Old ideals vanish as, the years progressing,
We seek the highest, ending fall on fall,
Until we only climb a little higher,
Experience teaching us the end is all.

But still are ideals waiting but the taking.
We catch a glimpse of heaven now and then;
But all seems as the breath upon a mirror—
Mere shadows, where the substance we have seen.

Of love we scarcely know its faintest image;
Though, race to race, its subjects we have been.
We've lost it in the scramble for the dollar;
Its cursed gold our wages now and then.

High ideals, ever winging with the spirit ;
And facts, borne down within a narrow groove.
The laws and customs prosper our undoing ;
Less cherished aims Parnassan may improve.

We need not search the heavens for our love ;
Earth-love but craves a love-glance nearer by.
The joys and woes of loving and of life,
A strong arm's shelter from the world's fierce strife.

And so we seek our ideal, day by day,
And far a-field, when love is arm's-length nigh ;
For mutual love our true hearts craving for,
On wing of love we search the sea and sky.

And so through endless centuries love has been
The loadstone leading over land and sea.
Through generations linking race on race,
Love's dual purpose all men's destiny.

The toil of men ; the labor of the world ;
The countless centuries past, and those to come ;
All without love were cold oblivion.
Love holds the world until life's day is done.

A SPEAKING LIKENESS

The clouds that sail the azure blue,
That sink down to the sea ;
The rainbows, arching heaven's blue—
They speak my love of thee.

They fill my heart alight with joy ;
They set my spirit free ;
And to the heart of Nature's heart
They speak my love of thee.

Youth's happy dream of love for love ;
Through smiles and tears I see
Thy lovely face, while stars and flowers—
They speak my love of thee.

MARTIAL HOSTS

At Landsend, where was meeting sea on sea,
Before the Lowlands diked and piked, sun-kissed,
Came Harold, son of David, the good king.
Before wild Hamlet, of great Shakespeare's song ;

Before the New Muse from the Old was born.
Like other Harold, from the old line sprung ;
The Free Lance and the rover, who had been
The trained soldier, 'fore our world scarce seen.

Such was the mould of Harold, he of David's line,
Who prospered 'mid the rule and clash of arms.
Whose spearmen, bowmen,—thousands under arms—
Marched 'neath red standards into Kingdom Come.

The beetling crags that towered o'er the plain,
They sheltered armies in their vale and wall;
And, winding 'tween the long vales and the hills,
New factions gathered, clashing arms on arms.

The goodly days of hurrying mortal strife—
A tossing mixture, 'tween sure gain and loss—
When higher spirits towered as the crags
Above the vortex, worshipping the cross.

Now cities of the Dead to lowlands razed—
Long-buried cities—pile the rocky bed;
And still the living trample, maze on maze,
'Neath hurrying feet, the houses of the dead.

We read their story in the March of Rome;
Her Christian miracle the tomb unsealed.
All hidden mysteries behind the veil,
Fraternal spirits immortally revealed.

Beyond the deserts of the living soul;
Beyond the compass of terrestrial bond;
Beyond the straits 'tween living and the dead;
We hear their voices the seven seas around.

HIS LAST BATTLE WON

His the Red Badge of Courage,
That leaps to command
O'er rank and file legions,
To fight hand to hand.

A Soldier of Fortune
No foe can withstand.
One dare-devil private
Who leads all the van.

O'er hell-fired ramparts
His deadly sword waves ;
Till shrouded in glory
In the colors he saves,

His courage devoted,
His life service done.
A hero immortal,
His last battle won.

THE GODS OF WAR

When the gods of war let loose,
And go racing to their fate,
Into the jaws of Death
They drag an army's weight.

A flaming sword it strikes abroad,
Starred to the hilt blood-red;

And buries deep the right and wrong,
 'Neath mountains of the dead.

But a God of Vengeance' seeing eye
 Accounted every loss;
And, o'er the field of carnage red,
 Uplifts the shining cross.

Man in His likeness God accounts.
 The world He died to save.
A savior still, He guardians
 Above the soldier's grave.

ONE MORE WAR

One more war before wrong is righted.

It is rolling o'er the deep,

In a chariot of fire,

To where the Gods of Vengeance sleep.

It will wrestle with dark nations,

Through a dark and bloody night,

Blinded by the lust of ages,

Till it falls down in the fight.

Nations then will know its burden ;

Cast is from their shoulders bare.

Gird their loins to better purpose,

And the end of war declare.

Step by step will nations vanquish ;
Peace prove conqueror of all ;
Commerce mightier than the sword ;
One nation's good, their all.

TOIL AND MOIL

Down 'neath the wheel of a Juggernaut car,
The sport of an angry god ;
And dazed by the flashing, grinding steel,
And the merciless ways abroad.

Hard, hurrying ways of grinding toil,
That cleave to the core and heart ;

Revealing the hidden image within,
And marring its sacred part.

And it's toil, toil, toil;
Of life till death apart.
While the molten lead
Pours out, blood-red—
Red as a bleeding heart.

And it's toil, toil, toil;
Until the spirit's dead
Of a Spartan race,
In the sweat of its face
Earning its daily bread.

Driven by mortal woes,
The slaves of an iron hand ;
Bowed down by gold and sold,
The serfs of a Christian land.

Drawn from the world's end's woes,
The martyrs of daily life.
O'erburdened with endless woes,
And fated to endless strife.

And it's toil, toil, toil ;
Beneath the rule of men
Who thrive and grow
On human woe,
And rule by a stroke of pen.

It's toil, toil, toil ;
 Beneath a merciless fate.
With hunger and sorrow,
 And pain for the morrow ;
Cast down in a hopeless state.

Driven by force of a hurrying world,
 Mad nations advance in line,
Along this slippery path to hell—
 With never a look behind.

Down to the gates of eternal doom—
 To a fiery furnace flame—
Over the forms of their brother men,
 Who cry to them in vain.

And it's toil, toil, toil ;
Through the day and night.
In a colding tomb,
And threatening doom,
Till heaven bursts on the sight.

It's toil, toil, toil ;
With never an end in view
But life's daily bread,
Till the heart lies dead,
And life's suffering is through.

BROTHERS-IN-ARMS

Down to the heart-break, down to the earth;
Death beating down all life and all worth.
Lost for a cause that a word would redressed,
And sent to the Godhead with sins unconfessed.

Sent to the Godhead at flash of a gun;
By Death's winged messenger, the envoy of One;
Down from quick life—a puff ending all—
And brothers-in-arms from life to death fall.

Sinking from man's estate, bravo and lust;
Bringing them lowly down, down to the dust.
Down to the dust while the armies march on,
Filling the heavens with thunder and song.

PEACE

Into the hearts of nations rushing,
Peace east and west does tend.
Into the arms of Christendom,
Till heathen gods unbend.

Tearing pagans from old idols,
Down before its throne.
Toppling to the lowly dust
Their gods of clay and stone.

Winning from a bloody field
One crystal peace alone ;
One Christian civilization,
Carved from a heart of stone.

WORLD-WISE

The heart speaks hope from day to day ;

But hopes beat down, O lack-a-day !

Till the heart lies dead as the darkling days ;

With never a friend to pray.

There's scarcely a spirit left it then—

So long befooled by the blinding glare

Of the guilt-eidged things that might have been,

But that only a fool would dare.

Through sunshine and shadow, from day to day

The world goes spinning the poor world's way.

We take our hearts to task through life,

As soon as any hope has flown.

We question life—its endless strife,

Why sorrow marks us for its own.

We've lived, and hoped the best of life;
We've battled for our rights as bold
As ever hero in the strife—
But still the world's turned cold.
Slowly the potter turns the clay,
Fashioning life the red earth's way.



YANKEEISMS

KNICKERBOCKER

Mine fadder was a Munster man,
 Upon the Isle of Sod.
And then he was a sailor man,
 Who sailed upon the ford.
His feet were wet when on the sod,
 And only dry when on the ford.
Klippety! Klippety! Klippety! Klop!

The Zudder Zee was dyked out ;
 The land was dyked in.
And when the Zudder Zee flowed out
 There was only Holland gin.
Klippety! Klippety! Klippety! Klop!

Now when mine fadder grew a man
He took himself a frau;
And she became, a year from then,
Ze mudder of me now.
Klippety! Klippety! Klippety! Klop!

When I sailed across the ocean blue
And landed on your shore,
Was I a Knickerbocker lass,
Or a Dutchy evermore?
Klippety! Klippety! Klippety! Klop!

OLD-TIME HYMNS

We've got a grand, new organ, Sue,
As smooth and fine as silk.
You run the scales, and so forth,
And draw music out like milk—

The milk of human kindness—
In a musical sort of flow ;
Like a harp of rushing waters,
A-babbling, to and fro.

“Throw Out the Life Line,” “Beulah Land,”
And all the old-time hymns ;
When the brothers and the sisters join
It makes the rafters ring.

The brothers and the sisters all,
 They make a striking team.
The sisters sing serenely high,
 And the brothers tip the beam.

Each beam and flash of lightsome song
 That the sisters raise, aloof,
Is gathered by the brothers strong,
 And boosted to the roof.

Then Deacons Smith and Jones join in,
 And Sister Amerella ;
And all the congregation smiles,
 To hear Amerella's feller.

For Amerella's feller, Jake,
Is long on lungs and beller.
And his idea of singing is
To drown the other feller.

The organ stands it like a man,
And roars its challenge wide;
Rolling its music, peal on peal,
Rivalling all beside.

Its very stops and frets get warm,
And shaking with emotion.
Its weird internals seem to make
A plea for sky excursions;

A-lifting of the soul in song,
 Sky high above the mob ;
Sky-piloting sky-reefs and shoals,
 In winds that shriek and sob.

The thunder of its music
 Goes echoing through space ;
And the chap that drives the organ
 Gets setting a hot pace.

He jockeys for the pole,—gets left,
 And breaks all round the track,
Till, called back by the judges,
 He comes high-falutin' back.

He starts, and breaks— and starts again;
Till, finally, at last,
They all get off together,
And reel the pace off fast.

Sophia, old girl, shakes all her curls,
And looks back at the bass,
Who takes the challenge with a bolt,
And spurts for second place.

They get down to their medicine,
And settle down in line.
Sophia leading all the choir,
Till Babe pipes up behind.

Babe's Brown's girl—"Baby Brown"—

And the way she mows things down,
And hustles to the front's, a stunt
That does the thing up brown.

It's good for sore eyes, sartin,
And when, before the choir,
She passes a pug nose ahead,
She couldn't tilt it higher.

Babe, she's a picture, tip to toe;
And the way she looks around
When she's on the higher altitudes,
Makes a feller's heart to pound.

You forget the organ and the choir ;
And you only seem to hear
One sweet voice dropping honey—
And the pearly gates swing near.

And that's the music I like best—
The real, old-fashioned kind,
That sort of moves the vitals,
And that lingers in the mind.

PEACEFUL

There's something in the browsing,
And the lowing of the herd—
The way it loiters on its way,
A-chewing of its curd—

That makes one feel as peaceful
As any one can be,
Who looks upon such peacefulness
As amazing mystery.

The lowing in the tie-up,
Is the most peaceful thing—
Next to the smell of clover,
And the cow-bells' ding-a-ling.

The atmosphere of peacefulness
That wraps around the vales,
The hills and dales of childhood,
Is a joy that never fails.

FISHING DAYS

You've read about the barefoot boy,
With his sapling alder pole,
Who gathers in the troutlets
From every likely hole ;

Whose psychic pull is wonderful ;
Whose mesmerizing grin
Lures the speckled beauties shore-ward ;
And who lands them on a pin.

He's freckled, sassy, stumpy,
And hardly looks the part
Of a high-brow hypnotizer ;
And, really now, at heart

I know him for a guileless,
Fun-loving, barefoot boy ;
Without any machinations,
Or psychic quality.

Not wielding occult influence,
Nor his pole a mystic wand.
Or making such large catches
As was never looked upon.

I've got as good a rigging
As in any sporting store:
Silk lines and spider leaders,
And flies and bait galore.

I whipped the stream on every side,
Before he got around,
And monopolized the landscape
Until the sun went down.

But a dozen trout and shiners
Was the only kind of slaughter
I carved out of this wilderness,
And land of laughing water.

I studied all his movements—

The way he made his cast.

I tried his every bait and lure,

Till, tuckered out at last,

I failed to make connections,

Though I tried his hook and pole,

And used his grubs and angleworms

In every likely hole.

Last, getting fairly skeptical,

Of the fish that wouldn't come,

I got dreaming of the fishing

In the days when I was young.

I could see myself a-standing
By a brook-side in a dell,
And catching speckled beauties,
And landing them, pell-mell.

And I wondered if the city
Had taken out of me
That piscatorial cunning
And native mastery.

Had I lost my early prowess,
And that instinctive sense
Of knowing how, and when, to strike
A high line munificence?

And then there came a memory,
That clarified my mind ;
Revealed to me the reason
Why I'd missed them every time :

It flashed across my vision
That I never tempted fate—
Never cast my old lures broadcast—
Without spitting on my bait !

ALL ASHORE FARMING

Did you ever start a-farming,
And a-grubbing in the soil,
Without seeing weeds, like marplots,
How they fairly seem to boil?

They o'er run the 'tater patches,
And over grow the corn;
And monopolize the landscape,
Till things seem most forlorn.

Now when I start a-farming,
I start the other way:
I start a crop of sorrel,
And give the land fair play.

I get the sour sweated out,
And then I go ahead,
And sweeten up the landscape
With sugar corn, instead.

I wet down every furrow
From a spring that never dries;
And I cultivate the landscape
Till it's all good for sore eyes—

Just as pretty as a picture,
With fields of ripening grain
That billow like the ocean blue,
And without a drop of rain.

With everything a-prospering,
As good as it can be,
I get pining for excitement,
And the days 'fore 'sixty-three.

You wouldn't think, to see me,
That I run the Mary Jane
Through three blockades, in 'sixty-one,
And had sailed the Spanish main.

But it's hard to tell a feller,
By the way he grubs and hoes,
Or his fuss-and-feather trappings,
And kid glove furbelows.

I know some common fellers
That were on the firing line ;
Stood up and took their medicine,
And returned it, every time.

I know a little tailor chap,
About five feet by four,
Who led the lads at Pumpkin Knob,
And drove the enemy ashore.

There was a circuit preacher,
Who enlisted with the Pats,
Was a holy terror scrapping,—
Lick his own weight in wild-cats.

And when I get a-thinking
About those glorious deeds,
It gets my Ebenezer up,
And I go out and kill the weeds.

BACK TO THE LAND

With a stone wall on the sky-line,
And a strip of medder ground;
With hills and dales and hay-cocks
A-scattered all around,

It's sort of good to mingle
With the native atmosphere;
The whiffs of new-mown meaders
Keeps one going for a year.

It sort of helps the running,
Far from the madding crowd,
And the dollars of our daddies,
To breathe, and speak out loud ;

To get into a hay-field
And swap our fine boiled shirt,
For a nearer nature makeshift,
And then put on a spurt.

To swing the tuneful pitchfork,
And rake in with the rake ;
Then try on the hay-tedder,
And give the hay a shake.

And when all's cured—the herds-grass,
The timothy and clover—
You race the hurrying thunderstorm
And get things under cover.

You feel so strong and hearty,
And all around first rate,
You're like a colt at pasture,
No matter how you ache.

It's hard to find a soft spot,
When you lay down to rest;
But it's sweet to grin and bear it,
For it's the aching that you guessed

Would surely overtake yer,
 'Cause yer can't house up a year,
And find your muscles working
 And your machinery in gear.

But you know you'll harden proper,
 Will do the thing up brown;
Will eat and drink like everything,
 'Fore you start back to town.

When the hay is in the scaffold,
 And the swallows in the eaves,
And the bees a-booming round yer,
 You can do as you darn please.

You keep eternal thinking
How much better it would be
To live akin to Nature,
And take things as they be.

Let's get back to the country,
And get our cowhides on;
And join the rousing chorus
When the ripple's on the corn.

HAIL COLMBIA

We've come down, through short ages,
To a bigger grip of earth
Than all the old world nations
That were kingdoms at our birth.

And we've done it just by doing
What our good men said to try;
And we did it with a hurrah;
And we did it mighty spry.

We fought from Plymouth Rock, U. S.,
Right over "Pike's Peak or bust",
And every critter in our way
He had to fight—or dust.

We couldn't stop to caution,
 'Cause we took things on the run.
And we converted thugs to citizens,
 By the Bible—and the gun.

It's a free and open eagle's crag,
 Our home since old Bull Run.
And the dales are white with spires,
 And we've spiked most every gun.

We never keep the worthy out—
 They're welcome to their bread;
We only ask they use their hands,
 And more than duck their head.

We invite all nations over seas ;
And when they step ashore,
They'll swear by Uncle Samuel,
'Fore they cross the Open Door.

THE BACK COUNTRY MEMBER

He can tell you about George Washington,
Daniel Webster, and good men—
Like Beecher, Talmage, and the rest,
And the Munroe Doctrine then.
He's been to Bunker Hill's tip-top,
And stood, 'neath standards furled,
Where first that shot was fired
That rang around the world.

He's not much on expansion,
But, when his cowhides bind,
He likes to have a boot-jack near,
To sort of ease his mind.
He's never very jealous like;
He never runs amuck;
He loves his own true house-wife,
His own dear "little duck".

She boosted him to Congress,
'Cause she cut his pants so queer
People took him for a genius,
And they rushed him with a cheer.
But he's just a minority,
Away from cows and loam.
And he's wasting to a shadow,
So he hopes they'll call him home.

U. S.

We've got a lot of monuments
We've raised to Uncle Sam—
As Union sons and daughters—
And we've raised them up by hand.

Pulling determined tugs-of-war
With every foreign nation,
That rustled for our lay-out,
'Fore our Independent Declaration.

Then we put our foot down, solid,
And a feather in our cap ;
And declared the Munroe Doctrine,
To show where we were at.

Of course they all mistrusted
We were getting out a bill,
When we drew our Declaration,
And the sword of Bunker Hill.

HISTORY MAKING

Priest, and saint and sinner—
History-making men ;
Prayer and cross and sabre—
But mightier is the pen.

Things objective and subjective,
Turning big worlds around.
Land and water ; Pharaoh's daughter ;
Kings, and things, confound.

Put it mildly, saint and sinner,
Let the whole world stand judge:
Cap-a-pie and criss-cross sabre,
Or a sacrament of blood.

Gird the loins—or neck with hang-noose;
Raise—or raze—the gallows-tree;
Headless dragons, poison aspens,
Repeat the old world's history.

THE EVERYDAY MAN

John Alden and Priscilla,
 Their names have long been sung;
And Darby and Joan, and such;
 And The Man Behind the Gun.

But how about the feller
 Who eats pie with his knife,
And is living, in a modest way,
 With his "little ducky" wife?

These toilers of the sea and land,
 They feed a hungry world.
They bear the brunt of battle—
 But no banners are unfurled;

No wreaths of laurel crown them—
 These for the heroes dead.
These living heroes toil and moil,
 Earning their daily bread.

No banners wave above them,
 And the history of their life
Is written on their tombstones—
 “He has ceased this mortal strife.”

POT LUCK

You can talk about your Broadway,
And the feeding up that way ;
How it's different as an auto
To the one-hoss, open shay ;

But I've a sneaking notion
That you agitate around,
And you'll get backing yellor-eyes,
And a bean-hole in the ground.

You've heard about the Sybarites,
And the dishes fit for kings—
How they paid the slippery ducats
For little onery things ;

Paid fortunes and come-uppance,
To learn to understand
That the innards of a mortal
Must square up with his bread-pan.

That none can feel rambunctious,
Without the teeth to chew
On all the elementary things
That fall like heavenly dew,

On the just and unjust—all alike—
Like manna from the sky,
And gravitate toward the bean-hole,
Or the clam-flats, handy by.

You take a lot of sea-weed,
All filled with pure ozone—
With zephyrs and the sea wind,
And the sad wave's monotone ;

And, under its protective wing,
You plant a lay of clams,
Of corn and sundry delicacies,
And then reach out your hands

And gather close the harvest,
The fruits of sea and land,
And you'll find that life's worth living—
A-living hand to hand.

Excursions into simple life—
A-living's plain's can be,
Just a-sampling of the harvests
Of the green earth and the sea.

And when the bean-hole's covered,
And the lobster's in the pot,
There's a good excuse for living,
And a-loafing 'round that spot;

For getting next the combine,
Like a honey-bee that's stuck
On a blooming calla lily,
And trying your pot luck.

CHURCH CIRCLES

Hezekiah and Sophia, Esphene and Maria,
Uncle Moses, Rube and Cy—
More uncles and aunts than you ever did see—
With distant relations, Faith, Hope and Charity.

Hezekiah, the prophet, and Esphene, the gossip,
Sophia, the muse, and Josh, Jake and Cy,
Were all heavy feeders, and deacons and leaders
Of old-fashioned families that never said die.

Deacon Cy led the halting right up to the calking;
An' they walked a straight line 'neath Uncle Abe's eye.
Sister Patience exhorted; in psalm-singing contorted,
The days Auld Lang Syne, to the Sweet By and By.

Electra and Beulah, an' Concord, Content,
Obadiah, Rebecca, Josephus and Shem,
Were all strong church members, and singers and ringers,
That followed church circles to help—straighten them!

GOD'S ACRE

Some day in the dim future,
When we are bylow bye,
They'll save for suffering Christians,
A big mansion in the sky.

Some day we'll have the gumption
To save our brother man,
And to let the wily heathen
Beat his tom-tom while he can.

God's acre—now the poor man's rest,
But underneath God's sky,
Right underneath Old Glory—
We'll save souls by and by.

ECONOMICAL RELIGIONS

The more I see of mankind,
And womankind, I do
Get sartin that improvements
Are wanted—quite a few.

That every tribulation,
It needs a Concord spring,—
Or some concording mechanism—
To make heaven, wing-a-wing.

We sartin ain't as able
To steer the narrow way,
Through the valley of the shadows,
Or believe a brighter day,

As our heartier progenitors,
Who lifted up in song
Their common tribulations,
To the place where they belong.

Sort of shifted off their burdens
To the keeping of their Lord;
And, in heathen situations,
Kept their missionary board.

They gilded every steeple,
In the worship of the Lord;
And in fire-proof salvation
Found their comforting reward.

It distracted all the mourners
From dwelling on their ills,
And saved—like Christian science—
A lot of doctor's bills.

HYDROSTATICALLY

The more I get a-musing

The way the world was planned—
Its heavy loads of slugs and thugs
And general contraband—

The more I feel, for sartin,
That the devil's got a part
In the general machinations
That animate its heart.

The sweetest disposition
That ambulates its way,
Gets gravitating naturally
Toward mortal misery.

The way the world was started—
 Its preponderance of weeds,
The daily toil and moil it takes
 To raise up useful seeds—

Encourages a reversion,
 Another general flood,
And the cutting off the prospect
 Of any resurrection bud.

We can start the thing a-moving,
 And philosophically abide
By its Noah's ark decisions,
 Until the floods subside.

Just stand with arms akimbo,
And just a-looking on.
Watch Nature get a hump on,
And hustle things along.

Dispersing all our worldly goods,
And floating them away ;
And working our salvation out
Sort of hydrostatically.

DIALECTUAL

I read a dialect story once,
A sort of rhapsody
About some dams and loggers,
Of an aqueous pedigree.

How the spike-footed bipeds
Did work the thing about,
To where the log-jam busted,
And things went up the spout.

The hero went progressing,
As happy as could be,
Warp-jawing over obstacles,
With pick-pole and peavee.

The further that I read the tale,
The more it seemed to me
That, aside from dams and dialect,
Things ran quite peacefully.

EXTREMES MEET

The most ornery feller
Has, somewhere in his breast,
An ideal plan of living,
That he never has confessed ;

That he shelters from inspection,
And the sacrilegious gaze,
And treasures all his lifetime,
Through all his mortal days.

It's the sweetest songs and ballads,
The tenderest of themes—
That breathe of home and loved ones—
That ever fairest seems.

Contrasting lights and shadows,
Extremes that gaily meet,
While dancing to the music:
“My Girl Has Sea Lion Feet.”

And sheltering heart's idols
At purposes criss-cross,
While trotting to the music:
“I'm Dressed Up Like a Horse.”

And when the show is over,
And the people moving on,
The ideal crashes in the waltz :
"I've Got My Feed-bag On."

IT

I met It on the prairie.
With an eye-glass in Its eye.
I asked It if It licked up,
"Oh now, really."

It varied some Its converse
By the flicker of an eye,
From the original old query :
To : "Really now, just fauncy!"

It rode astride a filly,
As lean as any hound ;
As high up as a steeple—
A thorough-bred all around.

A daisy-cutter thorough-bred,
As handsome as could be.
I offered It a hundred pounds—
It said: "Now just fauncy!"

I figured it out this way:
That It must surely be
A native of some country,
In lands beyond the sea.

Its very languid manner
 Didn't seem at all to fit
Into our cyclone atmosphere,
 Or adapt itself a bit.

To start Its circulation,
 I a gun held to Its head—
'Cause I wouldn't shoot a feller
 I could frighten nearly dead.

I talked to It right fatherly,
 Of how It must come down,
And I would ride the filly,
 And It could walk to town!

FIRST MEDALS

You hear about the motor

That never motes but when,

On a joy-ride jamboree,

Or a Rome-howl Grecian bend ;

The nearly Derby winner ;

The yacht that crossed the line

Ahead of all competitors—

But for a handicap of time.

You've heard about the high degrees,

And Bachelors of Arts—

The chap that'd won the medal—

If he'd kept his upper parts.

We've Holsteins and we've Jerseys,

That—nearly—won first prize ;

And Berkshires, China Polands,

That were all good for sore eyes.

But they never won first medal,
 Though rated as A1,
And better than the fellers
 That took first medal home.
I saw where I had missed it:
 I was sending honest goods
Into a shyster market,
 Where they were little understood.

Were received with dark suspicions,
 As an insult to the mind
Of men who lived by perquisite—
 And grafting—justice blind.
The A One quality, 'tis plain,
 In statesmanship, or blood,
Can seldom gain distinction,
 Till underneath the sod.

The very obvious best
That any one can see,
Would win out on its virtues,
First medals, certainly.
The every kind sure quality,
Then winning, every time,
Would leave little for the grafters,
But a lemon or a lime.

While every other medal
Was drifting down our way,
The A Ones wouldn't congregate
Around our destiny.
Medals every kind and color—
Of every sort and shade,
Except the kind referred to,
That, to call a spade a spade.

I designate "spook medals",
For experience has taught
They are the veriest Will-O'-the-Wisps,
And never could be caught.
As previously referred to—
I was getting at that point—
When the mention of First medals
Fairly put me out of joint.

When I ran across a mongrel pup—
All yellow, and a scrub—
That I gave an airy, fairy name,
To square his ugly mug.
I'd found him in the country,
A league or so from town;
In the highlands, near the border,
Near a dale in Larrydown.

I called him "Airedale", jokingly—
As though he were well-bred.
His sire I christened "Prince O'Clod",
Though "nonesuch" done instead.
To this dog with a good name,
No courtesy did fail;
He was covered with first medals,
From ugly mug to tail.

A surprising revelation,
That any kind of scrub
Could turn the trick dead easily.
That any ugly mug
Could win, by grace and favor,
Of a Prince's mighty name,
All the highfalutin' honors,
And the first prize of the game.

The feller with the best goods
 Would hardly cause surprise
If, before he had exhibited,
 He'd coppered every prize.
There'd be nothing for the grafters—
 No finesse in the game—
No changing white to black,
 And black to white again.

THE SOLUTION OF IT

I was reading in the paper,
To Mary Susan Ann,
About those sons of Italy
Who practice the Blank Hand.

And it fairly made Sue shudder,
To hear about the way
They raise their bloody money,
By Black Hand tragedy.

They make some resolutions
About blowing up a man
With dynamite or glycerine,
And sign it: "The Black Hand."

They pin it to his pillow,
Or tack it to his door ;
A-warning him to pay D. Q.
Or he'll see the Golden Shore.

And I told Mary Susan Ann
That, if I lived up that way,
I'd fix a sawed-off blunderbuss,
And blow 'em all away.

It would sort of clear the atmosphere,
Like a thunder-clap in June ;
And make those Dagos scuttle,
And sing another tune.

And Susan Ann admitted

That the plan would make them run—
If you got the aim for sartin,
And a man behind the gun.

Our daughter, just from college,
Thought perhaps it would be best
To use some small diplomacy,
And something called “finesse.”

I asked Susan Ann about it—
What that “fine S” thing could be.
For I wouldn’t show my ignorance
’Fore a young gal, twenty-three.

And Susan Ann allowed that she
Was surely stumped and puzzled;
But she wouldn't own it 'fore that gal,
Not if she went 'round muzzled.

But her woman's curiosity
And pride were surely worried.
Near asking Jennie what she meant—
Her mind was that much flurried.

It's the little things that hurt us,
That get stuck in the mind.
And it's hard to pry 'em out again;
And it seemed to undermine

Sue's constitution, day by day,
Till, finally, unstrung,
She said she'd stood it long's she could,
And would find out the solution.

Now Mary Susan Ann is some,
And when her mind gets set,
She's just like Giberalter—
And yer can't joggle her or pet.

I've read about the fellers
That searched the Holy Grail;
But they's nothing side of Susan Ann,
When she sets on a trail.

She kept it up a fortnight,
And grew thin as a rail.
Sometimes she seemed more hopeful—
But mostly like she'd fail.

I hadn't lost my courage,
'Cause I knew the way she held
To anything she undertook.
Perhaps 'twas the way 'twas spelled.

That made it hard to cipher out,
Or to pronounce it pat;
Might bother folks to understand
What Sue was driving at.

I gave her every lee-way
To make the goal and win.
Till last, one day, I asked her, straight,
To name the gaul-darn thing.

I saw she hesitated sum,
And she finally confessed
That there warn't a yap in Greentown
Could name the thing, or guess.

I was getting slim and peaked
A-harping on the thing,
And Susan grew a shadow,
Until her wedding-ring—

That'd always fitted tight's a drum—
Grew looser every day.
It was painful to imagine,
She was wasting quite away.

So consumed with the emotion,
The deep, internal sting,
But for lack of eddication
She could solutionize the thing.

Then I put my foot down, solid,
And I said to Mary Ann :
"I'll not eddicate another child,
Unless it is a man.

A man can keep his mouth shut,
And never go and shout
His languages about so,
And knows what he's about.

If Jennie wasn't grown so,
I'd stand her on her head,
And shake such nonsense out of her,
Afore she chanced to wed.

Afore she made man miserable,
The rest his natural life,
By her highfaluting languages.
Now she'd make a pretty wife!

Imagine if he asked her
To pass the tea or bread,
And she said: "We, Monsieur, la, la!"
When English'd do instead.

She's been harping on these languages
About three times a day.
I'll ask her, when she harps again,
If she takes me for a jay.

And about that "fine S" thing,
Don't you worry any more.
They've got another system
For settling that score.

They're going to fill the Dagos up
With microbe germs, and then
Let them loose among the villains,
And infect the lot of them.

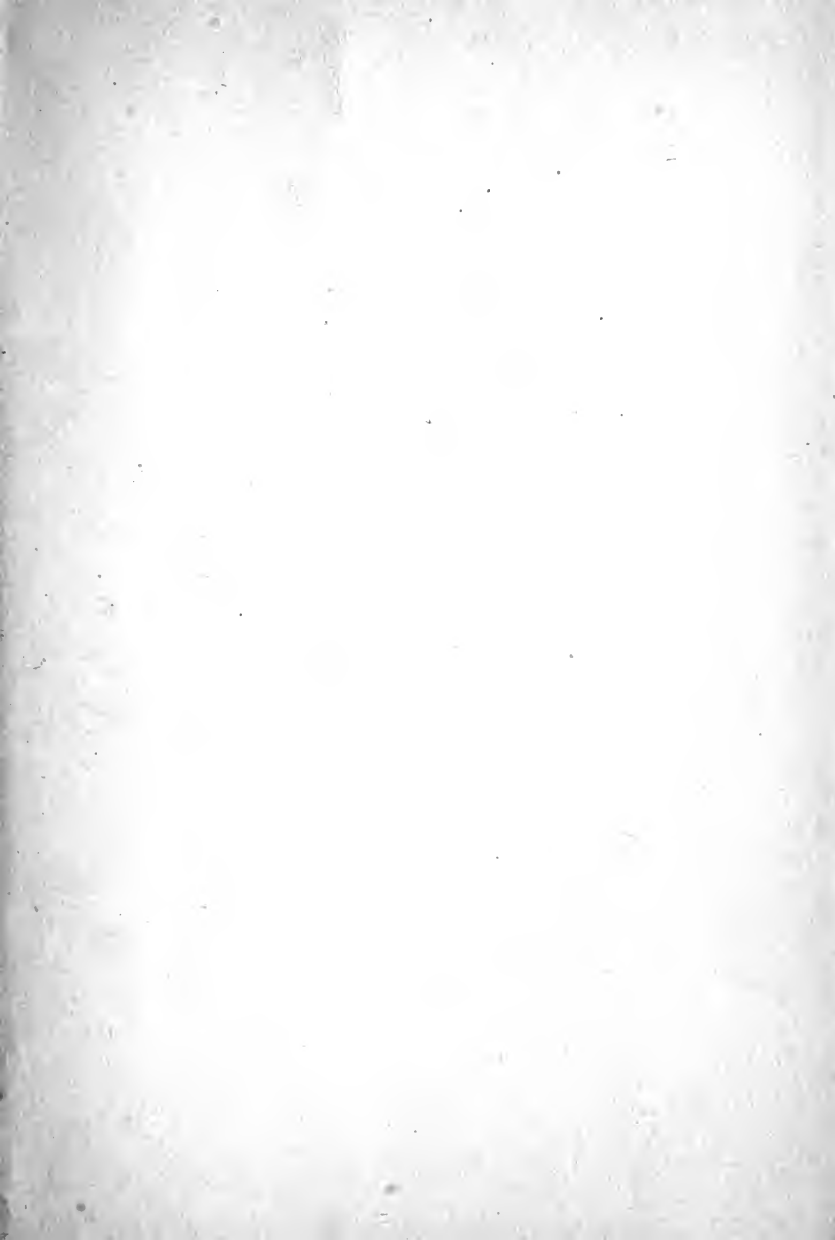
The last speaker at the Grange said,
That microbes were the thing—
They'd kill off any nuisance,
If you'd give 'em half a fling.

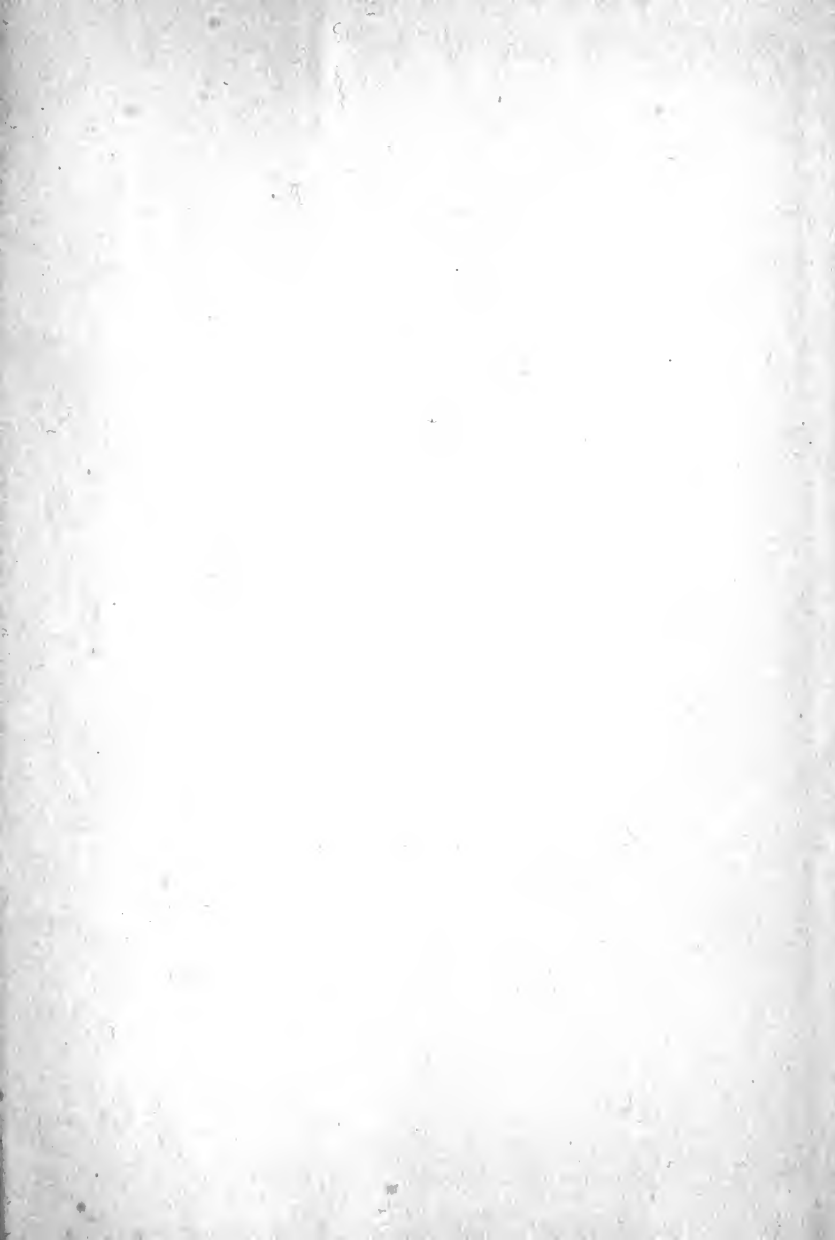
They'd kill a nest of vipers
As dead as a door nail;
That science and the doctors
Would side-track every jail.

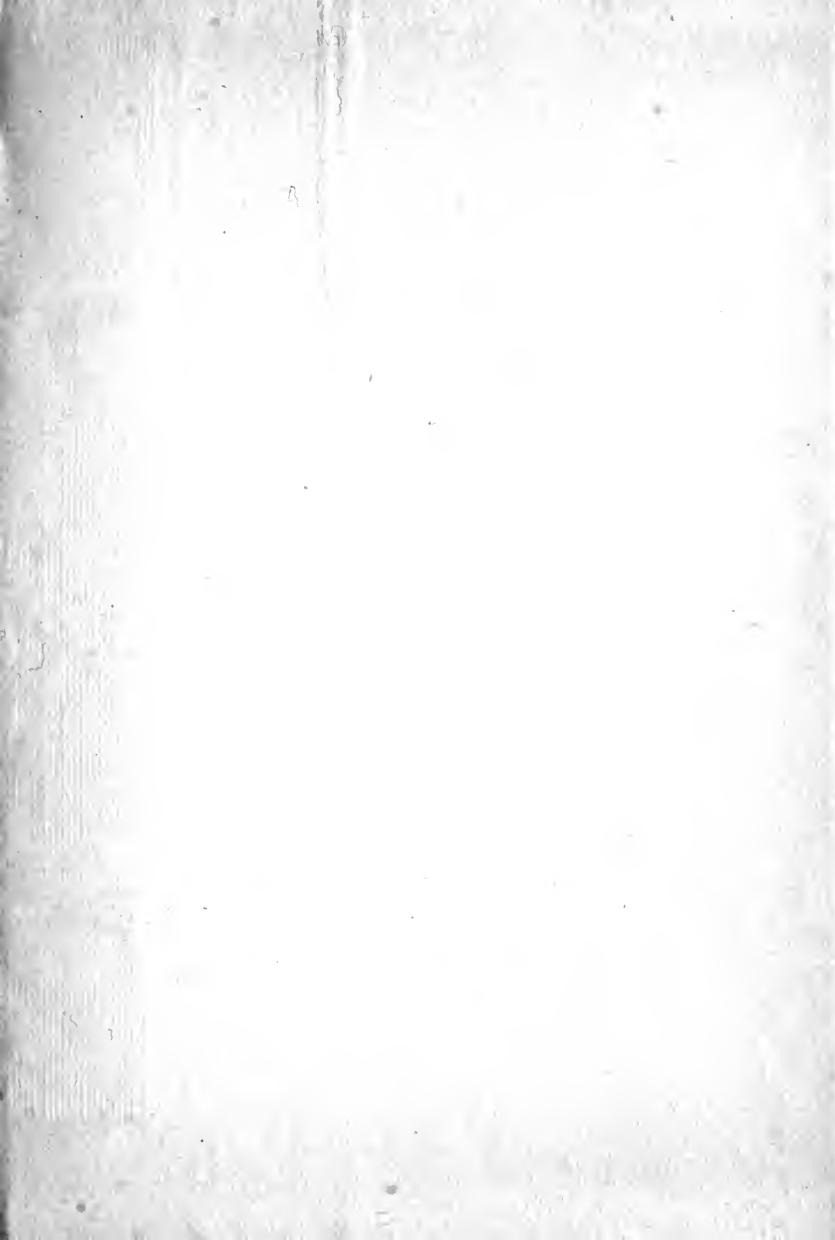
I asked the doctor, privately,
If a microbe had been found
That could cure a case of languages.
I was kind of edging 'round

To find a cure for "We, Monsieur."
And the doctor did allow
That the microbe and bacilli
Could kill—or cure—a cow.

So I guess we needn't worry,
'Cause we've got the upper hand,
And can control the situation
Long's there's a microbe in the land.







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